

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 81

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the two-year anniversary of the human rights crackdown in Cuba.

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 81

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Whereas in March 2003, Cuban dictator Fidel Castro arrested more than 75 journalists, labor union organizers, civic leaders, librarians, and human rights activists as political prisoners;

Whereas the Cuban regime, after summary trials which were denounced by the international community, sentenced these innocent men and women to a total of more than

1,000 years in prison for trying to exercise their civil and political rights, many of whom are anticipated to die in prison before their sentence is completed;

Whereas the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms a commitment to fundamental human rights and to the dignity and worth of all people;

Whereas the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which establishes global human rights standards, asserts that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention;

Whereas these arrests and convictions were an atrocious attempt by the Cuban regime to crush the citizens' movements for a free and democratic Cuba;

Whereas Fidel Castro has tentatively released a limited number of prisoners from jail but these political activists are subject to arrest and imprisonment at any time pursuant to "extra penal licenses";

Whereas in 2004, the Cuban regime continued its suppression of democracy and repression of human rights activists, imprisoning a significant number of political dissidents during the year on such charges as disrespect for authority, public disorder, disobedience, and resisting arrest;

Whereas in April 2004, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopted a resolution deploring the sentencing of "political dissidents and journalists" in 2003 and calling for a visit to Cuba by a Personal Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights which was later denied by the Cuban regime;

Whereas Fidel Castro continues to hold hundreds of political prisoners in his jail cells;

Whereas Amnesty International has recognized all journalists and activists who were arrested in the crackdown in March 2003 as prisoners of conscience;

Whereas the Cuban regime engages in torture and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment and punishment against political prisoners to force them into submission, including intense beatings, extended periods of solitary confinement, and denial of nutritional and medical attention, according to the Department of State's Country Report on Human Rights 2004;

Whereas religious freedom in Cuba is severely circumscribed, and clergy and lay people suffer sustained persecution by the Cuban State Security apparatus;

Whereas the Cuban regime denies the people of Cuba equal protection under the law, disallows them recourse for remedying violations of human rights and civil liberties, and instead enforces a judicial system which infringes upon fundamental rights; and

Whereas the United States Congress has stood, consistently, on the side of the Cuban people and supported their right to be free: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) condemns in the strongest possible terms
4 the arrest of more than 75 journalists, labor union
5 organizers, civic leaders, librarians, and human
6 rights activists as political prisoners in March 2003

1 and the Cuban regime's continuing repressive crack-
2 down against the brave internal opposition and the
3 independent press;

4 (2) expresses its profound admiration and firm
5 solidarity with the internal opposition and inde-
6 pendent press of Cuba;

7 (3) demands that the Cuban regime imme-
8 diately release all political prisoners, legalize all po-
9 litical parties, labor unions, and the press, and hold
10 free and fair elections;

11 (4) declares the acts of the Cuban regime, in-
12 cluding its widespread and systematic violation of
13 human rights, to be in violation of the Charter of
14 the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of
15 Human Rights;

16 (5) declares that the rule of law should replace
17 the rule of force so that the fundamental and in-
18 alienable rights of every individual in Cuba are pro-
19 tected;

20 (6) calls for the European Union, as well as
21 other countries and international organizations, to
22 continue to pressure the Cuban regime to improve
23 its human rights record; and

24 (7) calls for United Nations member countries
25 to vote against the Cuban regime's membership in

1 the United Nations Commission on Human Rights
2 and the passage of a resolution at the 61st session
3 of the United Nations Commission on Human
4 Rights that holds the Cuban regime accountable for
5 its gross violations of human rights and civil lib-
6 erties.

Passed the House of Representatives April 27, 2005.

Attest:

Clerk.